

Joint Blue Force Situational Awareness (JBFSa)

The Marine Corps is actively participating in Joint Blue Force Situational Awareness (JBFSa) Integrated Product Team (IPT) efforts to address the interoperability shortfalls existing between the numerous Blue Force (friendly force) tracking and situational awareness systems in use today, and to define the capabilities required to achieve a joint solution in the future. The JBFSa IPT is a multi-service endeavor to enhance the combat effectiveness of Blue Forces and integrate the Blue Force Common Operational Environment (COE) into a Common Operational Picture working within the Global Information Grid (GIG). It will identify, classify, and characterize the status of joint and coalition forces operating throughout the battlespace, both within and beyond the line of sight. The Blue Force COE GIG will operate globally, providing 24/7 support to the full spectrum of operations (from major combat to peacetime engagement), as well as stability and sustainment operations, and home-station training.

Although valuable, today's service-specific Blue Force Tracking (BFT) systems tend to operate independently with separate types of mission-profile support, user devices, information-dissemination architectures, and messaging standards. When implemented across the services, Department of Defense agencies, and coalition forces, the objective JBFSa system(s) will result in the seamless sharing, distribution,

and display of Blue Force information to improve overall situational awareness.

Using lessons learned from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom—and tying their efforts to the overall JBFSa effort—the Marine Corps and Army have developed a strategy to converge to a single, joint BFT capability that will allow units on the battlefield to see, and be seen by, nearby units without having to contend with equipment integration issues and communication constraints. Near term efforts to standardize operational architectures and align software baselines will contribute significantly toward solving the interoperability challenges, associated with achieving a single land component picture and disseminating information needed for improved battlespace situational awareness.

Future conflicts will involve unpredictable enemy actions on an asymmetrical battlefield, requiring greater functional coordination across all battlespace domains. This increased coordination will rely upon the rapid and widespread dissemination of all Blue Force location, status and intent. JBFSa will focus on better identification, retrieval, dissemination, correlation, filtering, fusion, and other processing of Blue Force data. It will also improve the Marine Corps' ability to conduct distributed operations by the timely transport of JBFSa data over existing and planned communications and networking infrastructure to the warfighters who need it.